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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 172040

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

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SUBJECT: INTSUM 601 - JULY 7, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. LEBANON. SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON NOW APPEARS TO BE TO BREAK THE BACK OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS AND TO ELIMINATE THEM AS AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL AND MILITARY FORCE. APPARENTLY SYRIAN LEADERS ARE ANGERED WITH CONTINUING CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE TO SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON; THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF TONY FRANJIYAH, MOREOVER, WAS VIEWED IN DAMASCUS AS A DIRECT CHRISTIAN ATTACK ON SYRIA.

2. SYRIAN OBJECTIVES ARE ALSO REVEALED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS REPORTEDLY BEING CONDUCTED BETWEEN SARKIS AND THE SYRIANS OVER THE FUTURE OF THE CEASEFIRE. THESE NEGOTIATIONS CENTERED INITIALLY ON SYRIAN CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CEASEFIRE. HIGH-LEVEL SYRIAN OFFICIALS CLAIM, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYRIANS CURRENTLY ARE NOT IMPOSING ANY CONDITIONS FOR MAINTAINING A CEASEFIRE AND HAVE ORDERED

RESTRAINT IN RESPONDING TO PROVOCATIONS. IF TRUE, THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR SHIFT IN SYRIAN POLICY AND MAY INDICATE
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THAT DAMASCUS IS RESPONDING TO THE SHARP REACTION TO THE SYRIAN SHELLING BY THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS, THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT, THE ISRAELIS, AND WESTERN STATES.

3. DAMASCUS, THEN, MAY BELIEVE THAT IF SYRIA CONTINUES ITS PRESENT COURSE, ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING UNFAVORABLE REPERCUSSIONS COULD RESULT:

(A) SARKIS PROBABLY WILL RESIGN, AS HE HAS THREATENED, THUS ELIMINATING THE LAST VESTIGE OF SYRIAN LEGITIMACY IN LEBANON. SARKIS WOULD FIND HIMSELF IN THE UNTENABLE POSITION OF BEING UNABLE TO SUPPORT EITHER THE CHRISTIANS OR THE SYRIANS.

(B) THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, ALONG WITH A CONSIDERABLE SEGMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY ARE LIKELY TO LAUNCH MAJOR ATTACKS ON THE SYRIANS THROUGHOUT LEBANON;

(C) THE ISRAELIS MAY INTERVENE AND STRIKE AT SYRIAN POSITIONS IN LEBANON. THE ISRAELIS HAVE INDICATED THAT SYRIA'S CRUSHING OF THE CHRISTIANS WOULD UPSET THE REGIONAL POLITICAL BALANCE.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, SYRIA'S FAILURE TO PRESS ITS ADVANTAGE WITH THE CHRISTIANS WILL LEAD THE LEBANESE TO CONCLUDE DAMASCUS WAS DEFEATED. THIS COULD RESULT IN EQUALLY UNFAVORABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA'S POSITION:

(A) PHALANGE AND SHAMOUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND OVER SARKIS WILL INCREASE.

(B) SYRIA'S FRIENDS IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY--INCLUDING FRANJIYAH--WILL BE WEAKENED BECAUSE OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH DAMASCUS.

(C) A DEFEAT WOULD DEMORALIZE THE SYRIAN ARMED FORCES.
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THE SYRIANS REPORTEDLY HAVE TAKEN CASUALTIES; TO QUIT NOW WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE SYRIAN MILITARY AND TO DOMESTIC OPINION.

5. IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT ALLOW INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO DETER IT FROM A POLICY IN LEBANON WHICH IT BELIEVED TO BE IN SYRIA'S INTEREST. IN JUNE 1976, FOR INSTANCE, THE SYRIANS WERE UNDER HEAVY INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO HALT THEIR OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS. DAMASCUS WAS ISOLATED IN THE ARAB WORLD. THE MODERATE ARABS, INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA, CUT OFF AID TO DAMASCUS. LIBYAN AND IRAQI SOLDIERS WERE FIGHTING WITH THE PALESTINIANS AGAINST THE SYRIANS, AND THE SOVIET UNION THREATENED TO STOP ITS ASSISTANCE. NEVERTHELESS, ASSAD PRESSED ON WITH HIS OFFENSIVE UNTIL THE PALESTINIANS AGREED TO SYRIAN TERMS FOR A CEASEFIRE.

6. A KEY FACTOR IN THE SYRIAN DECISION WILL BE THEIR ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS. ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF BEIRUT AND REPEATED PUBLIC WARNINGS BY THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY WHILE THE CHRISTIANS ARE ANNIHILATED UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE INCREASED SYRIAN ANXIETY. DAMASCUS DOES NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN ANOTHER ARAB-ISRAELI WAR AT THIS TIME; THEIR ARMED FORCES ARE NOT PREPARED.

7. USING THE 1976 EXAMPLE, HOWEVER, THE SYRIANS MAY DECIDE TO RISK AN ISRAELI ATTACK AND TO CALL THE ISRAELI BLUFF. IN 1976, THE SYRIANS DREW DOWN THEIR FORCES IN THE GOLAN AND ADVANCED INTO LEBANON DESPITE ISRAELI THREATS OF INTERVENTION. MOREOVER, IF THE SYRIANS CEASED THEIR OFFENSIVE UNDER ISRAELI THREATS, THE ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE HUMILIATED THE SYRIAN ARMY IN LEBANON FOR THE THIRD TIME.
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(THE FIRST OCCURRED IN JANUARY 1976 WHEN ISRAELI THREATS FORCED A SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM NABATIYAH. THE SYRIANS WERE ALSO EMBARRASSED IN MARCH 1978 WHEN THEY STOOD BY AS THE ISRAELIS INVADED SOUTHERN LEBANON.)

8. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE DECISION MAY NOT BE THE SYRIANS' TO MAKE, FOR THE CHRISTIANS APPEAR EMBOLDENED BY RECENT EVENTS. THEY ACCEPTED THE SURRENDER OF 200 SYRIAN SOLDIERS WHOM THEY HAD SURROUNDED IN BEIRUT, AND THE ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS HAVE AROUSED CHRISTIAN HOPES OF DIRECT ISRAELI ASSISTANCE. MOREOVER, SARKIS HAS BEEN MUCH MORE RESPONSIVE TO CHRISTIAN DEMANDS.

9. WHILE THE CHRISTIANS STILL THINK THAT THE SYRIAN OBJECTIVE IS TO BREAK THEM AS AN EFFECTIVE MILITARY AND POLITICAL FORCE, THEY NOW APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT, IF THEY PRESS THE FIGHT WITH THE SYRIANS, WHICH THE CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IS FOR THEIR VERY EXISTENCE, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO WIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THEY DO NOT PRESS THE OFFENSIVE

NOW, THE CHRISTIANS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE SYRIANS WILL ANNIHILATE THEM LATER. (CONFIDENTIAL)

10. WEST BANK. COMMENTING ON THE ISRAELI DISMISSAL OF BEIT JALA MAYOR BISHARA DAUD, THE WEST BANK DAILY AL-QUDS EDITORIALIZED THAT THE ACTION IS A DISTURBING REMINDER OF THE ARBITRARY POWER WHICH ISRAELIS HOLD OVER ELECTED WEST BANK OFFICIALS. OUR JERUSALEM CONSULATE GENERAL UNDERSTANDS THAT SEVERAL WEST BANK MAYORS CAUCUSED ON JULY 4 TO CONSIDER WHAT COULD BE DONE TO PREVENT THE MAYOR'S DISMISSAL FROM OFFICE. IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO APPEAL THE DECISION TO ASK THE MILITARY GOVERNOR TO SHOW CAUSE FOR THE ACTION.

11. MEANWHILE, HEBRON'S MAYOR QAWASIMA ASSERTED PRIVATELY THAT WEST BANK LEADERS WOULD PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE
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MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS ONLY IF ISRAEL ACCEPTS PRINCIPLES OF WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION. THE MAYORS WOULD REACT PASSIVELY SHOULD THE WEST BANK BE RETURNED TO JORDAN. IN ANY CASE, EVENTUAL LINKS TO JORDAN ARE A CERTAINTY, IN HIS VIEW, GIVEN FAMILY AND ECONOMIC TIES. HE REGARDS ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AS THE SINGLE MOST REAL THREAT AT PRESENT TO THE PALESTINIAN CHARACTER OF THE WEST BANK. (CONFIDENTIAL)

12. PDRY. RADIO MOSCOW YESTERDAY REJECTED "FALSE ACCUSATIONS" OF "AN ALLEGED COMMUNIST PLOT IN THE SOUTH OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA" AND SAID "IT IS BECOMING CLEARER THAT THE MAIN FOMENTOR OF THE ACTIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THE PDRY IS US IMPERIALISM." IN AN UNATTRIBUTED COMMENTARY, RADIO MOSCOW:

(A) QUOTED PRESS REPORTS THAT "SAUDI ARABIA AND A NUMBER OF OTHER GULF STATES HAVE DRAWN UP MILITARY PLANS

AGAINST THE PDRY";

(B) DESCRIBED ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS ON YEMEN AS "A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF THE PDRY"; AND

(C) ACCUSED "IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM" OF SEEKING "TO TIGHTEN THEIR GRIP ON ALL THIS REGION AND TO CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT THE PEOPLES AND OIL AND OTHER RESOURCES."

13. A TASS ROUNDUP ARTICLE ON THE PDRY PUBLISHED JULY 6 IN PRAVDA ESCALATES THE WARNING LEVEL BY SWITCHING FROM PDRY SOURCES TO DIRECT TASS COMMENT. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TASS ARTICLE LIES IN THE UNMISTAKABLE WARNING IT PROVIDES OF FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE (PRESUMABLY FROM ETHIOPIA, CUBA, AND OTHER BLOC STATES) SHOULD THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INTER-YEMENI CONFLICT BE ENTERED BY OTHERS. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

14. LIBYA-ALGERIA. QADHAFI'S WELL PUBLICIZED, WEEK-LONG VISIT TO ALGERIA LAST MONTH WAS APPARENTLY UNDERTAKEN TO DISPEL RUMORS OF FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND TO REAFFIRM THEIR SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF A RESURGENCE OF WESTERN "IMPERIALISM" IN AFRICA. DESPITE AN ABUNDANCE OF MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RHETORIC, HOWEVER, THE LIKELIHOOD OF TANGIBLE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES OVER THE LONGER TERM IS SMALL.

15. THE IMPETUS FOR THE MEETING WAS THE THREAT POSED TO AFRICA BY WHAT QADHAFI AND BOUMEDIENE TERMED "NEOCOLONIALIST MILITARY INTERVENTIONS" BY FRANCE IN THE SAHARA, CHAD, AND ZAIRE. THE TWO LEADERS TRADED VERBAL SUPPORT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF PRIMARY INTEREST: QADHAFI TOOK A TOUGHER LINE AGAINST MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO IN THE SAHARAN CONFLICT, WHILE BOUMEDIENE RETURNED THE FAVOR WITH RESPECT TO CHAD. BOTH LEADERS, ALSO APPARENTLY INTENDED THEIR STATEMENTS TO WARN TUNISIA ABOUT ITS "REACTIONARY" DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES.

16. NEVERTHELESS, ALGERIA'S CONTEMPT FOR THE LIBYAN LEADERSHIP, MUTUAL DISTRUST, AND POLICY DIVERGENCIES CAN BE EXPECTED TO PRECLUDE EFFECTIVE COOPERATION. MOREOVER, EACH LEADER IS CONVINCED THAT THE OTHER HAS DESIGNS ON PORTIONS OF HIS TERRITORY. (CONFIDENTIAL) VANCE

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